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themselves believed, of the Terrestrial Paradise. For if Byron had not sojourned at the monastery as he did in 1816-17, it is possible that the attention of the monks might not have been turned in the direction of his writings and those of the other authors in whom he was especially interested.

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BYRON AND SHELLEY

There is evidence in Byron's poetry of some kind of relation between him and Shelley in the matter of the idea of Prometheus. The two poets first met in 1816, during Shelley's trip on the Continent with Mary Godwin and Jane Claremont. In the words of Richard Garnett (*D. N. B.*, s. v. Shelley), "Byron's poetry, to its great advantage, was deeply influenced by his new friendship." From this epoch, July, 1816, dates Byron's poem *Prometheus*, some lines of which strikingly anticipate Shelley's interpretation of the myth of the rebellious Titan; the following will serve as examples:

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refused thee even the boon to die:

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;

Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force.

Again in *Manfred*, I, 2, the hero's soliloquy on the cliffs of the Jungfrau at sunrise shows an anticipation of the opening soliloquy of Prometheus in Shelley's poem; both, of course, derive from the apostrophe, "O dios aither," in Æschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. The point to be noted is that *Manfred* preceded *Prometheus Un-*

bound by two years. Then, when we compare the passage beginning,—

My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye,
And thou, the bright eye of the universe
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight . . .

from Byron, with that from *Prometheus Unbound*, Act I, beginning,—

I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? . . .

we are confronted with the question, which of the two poets inspired the other. The evidence of the poems points toward Byron as the original, in that in 1816 he had written a poem setting up Prometheus as the prototype and symbol of the liberators of the human mind, and in 1817 had embodied an imitation of perhaps the most striking passage of the Greek tragedy in a lyrical drama of his own.

On the other hand, in Mrs. Shelley's *Note on the Poems of 1816*, to be found in most editions of Shelley, "the *Prometheus* of Æschylus" occurs in the list of books read during that eventful year. Does it not, then, seem better in accord with what we know of these two poets to suppose that Shelley read the play of Æschylus and saw clearly the significance of the figure of Prometheus for the world of the Restauration, that he talked about it with Byron in Switzerland, and that the more facile poet gave the earlier expression to ideas which he must have regarded as developed in common? The figure of Prometheus made a lasting impression on Byron's mind, for in 1823 he compares Napoleon at St. Helena to Prometheus,—

Hear! hear Prometheus from his rock appeal
To earth, air, ocean, all that felt or feel
His power and glory. . . .

The Age of Bronze, v.

Certainly here is a neat little problem in sources and origins.

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